

Remarks

Drawings

On page 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner required new drawings that showed every feature of the claims, and in particular, the heating arrangement of claim 8. First, it is noted that claim 8 has been canceled. A formal drawing, labeled "Replacement Sheet" as required, is submitted herewith. This is to replace the previous drawings with formal drawings, and hence, a Letter to the Draftsperson of the Patent Office should not be necessary. This submission should overcome the objections to the drawings.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC 102

Claims 1-7 are rejected as being anticipated by Hermann.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC 102/103

Claims 1-5, 8 and 9 are rejected as anticipated by DE 10120027, DE 4003090, and DE 9210028 as applied in Applicant's International Application EP 03013202. Amended claim 1 includes the features of original claim 6, in order to overcome the objections based upon the above-mentioned International Application and the prior art documents cited in the European Search Report.

Further, Claims 8 and 9 are rejected as being unpatentable over Hermann.

Claim Rejections Based Upon Hermann

Applicant respectfully believes that the feature "liquid" fuel of amended claim 1 distinguishes the claimed invention from Hermann. The feature of "liquid" fuel is found in paragraph [0018] of the specification. Hermann's catalytic combustor is specifically designed for gaseous fuels and would not work with liquid fuel.

Further, the assertions regarding Hermann on pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action, e.g., the following features of Hermann: "...a fuel distribution element (6) covering the housing wall (20) on a side facing toward a combustion chamber..." seem to be based upon the tacit assumption that the space surrounded by the annular gas-distributing wall (6) (see Hermann's Fig. 1) is a combustion chamber. However, this assumption and the conclusions drawn from that assumption are, respectfully, incorrect. The space is a mixing chamber 4 (see Fig. 1 and col. 3, lines 15-67), where a first gas entering through apertures 8 will mix with a second gas entering through the porous sintered metal plate 20. As Fig. 2 and col. 4, lines 1-48 show, the mixing section of Hermann's catalytic combustor is separated by a relatively large distance (and among others by an open cell foam homogenizer/diffuser 50 from the combustion section). Therefore, Applicant, respectfully, cannot identify Hermann's mixing chamber.

Further, according to Hermann, a porous sintered metal partition 12, which was incorrectly identified with Applicant's evaporator medium, is between an annular plenum 9 (identified with Applicant's fuel distribution channel arrangement) and the annular gas-distributing wall 6 (identified with Applicant's fuel distribution element). In other words, in Hermann, gas entering the plenum 9 of the catalytic combustor passes through the porous sintered metal partition 12 and enters the mixing chamber 4 through the apertures 8 (see col. 3, lines 15-36). Accordingly, the (fuel inlet) apertures 8 receive fuel from the porous sintered metal partition 12 and not the other way around, as asserted on page 4 of the Office Action.

Therefore, Hermann does not anticipate the present claims, in particular, claim 5, even if the porous sintered metal partition 12 could be identified with Applicant's evaporator medium.

Applicant respectfully believes that the claims, as amended, are allowable.

A two-month extension of time in which to respond to the outstanding Office Action is hereby requested. A PTO 2038 authorizing charging a credit card in the amount of \$450 is enclosed for the prescribed Large Entity two-month extension fee.

Wherefore, further consideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



M. Robert Kestenbaum
Reg. No. 20,430
11011 Bermuda Dunes NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111
Phone (505) 323-0771
Fax (505) 323-0865

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I hereby certify under 37 CFR §1.8(a) that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail with sufficient postage on the date indicated below and is addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on 05/30/2006.



M. Robert Kestenbaum